

August 25, 2021 – New Public Masking Requirement, Vaccine Card & Back to School Plan

The COVID-19 mask mandate for all indoor public spaces in British Columbia is in effect. Provincial Health Officer Dr. Bonnie Henry says the temporary order will be reassessed as the [BC vaccine card](#) requirement is fully implemented. “We need to continue to do those things that keep us safe,” she said. “One of those is wearing masks in public indoor settings as rates of transmission in our communities have crept upwards.”

The mask mandates applies in:

- malls, shopping centres, coffee shops and retail and grocery stores;
- liquor and drug stores;
- airports, city halls, libraries, community and recreation centres;
- restaurants, pubs and bars (unless seated);
- on public transportation, in a taxi or ride-sharing vehicle;
- areas of office buildings where services to the public are provided;
- common areas of sport and fitness centres when not engaged in physical activity;
- common areas of post-secondary institutions and non-profit organizations.



Last week, Dr. Henry introduced a new public health order, the [COVID-19 Vaccination Status Information and Preventive Measures Order](#). This order requires long-term care and assisted living operators including Island Health to provide the PHO with information regarding care providers working in long-term care and assisted living sites in order to verify vaccination status by September 1, 2021. The order also imposes Preventive Measures on unvaccinated care team members effective September 8, 2021. The PHO has also provided notice that care providers will not be allowed into facilities if they are not fully immunized by October 12, 2021. “We have now seen, with the transmission of the new variants, that we need extra protection for this highly vulnerable population... even when resident immunization is high, as it is in facilities across the province, we have seen transmission from unvaccinated staff, and it has reinforced the need for protection” said Dr. Henry.

The BC Government also recently released [back to school plans](#), including mandatory masks for all staff and visitors in schools, as well as students in grades 4-12, with masks recommended for K-3 students. Masks will be required in all indoor areas, including classrooms, and on school buses; there are no plans for student cohorts. Last year’s provisions will continue, including daily health checks, hand hygiene, and enhanced cleaning, and work continues on improving ventilation systems to ensure good air quality in schools. [Post secondary institutions](#) are covered by the provincial mask mandate, with mandatory vaccinations for student housing, and proof of vaccination required for on campus pubs, dining halls, sporting events and athletic facilities.

Many physicians and other health care workers were vaccinated prior to the implementation of the ImmsBC registration system. If you are in that group, you may need to upload your immunization record to be able to get access to the BC Vaccine Card. You can check [Health Gateway](#) to see if your immunization record is up to date, and if your record is not there or is incomplete, you can submit your record at www.immunizationrecord.gov.bc.ca.

Island Health Region Total Vaccines Administered To Date	% Population Immunized (18+) 1st Dose To Date	% Population Immunized (12+) 1st Dose To Date	% Population Immunized (18+) 2nd Dose To Date
1,259,766	82.0%	81.4%	76.2%

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

[A message from the College of Physician and Surgeons of BC Registrar](#)

The use of virtual care was accelerated by both providers and patients during the COVID-19 pandemic and key learnings have informed the College's recent revised Virtual Care practice standard. Please review the updated practice standards around the appropriateness of virtual care.

[BCCDC: Why is the 2nd Dose Important?](#)

The BCCDC is reminding everyone that the 2nd dose is the essential second half of your vaccine series. Both doses are needed to get the most effective protection against serious cases of COVID-19 and provide longer-lasting protection.

[Island Health prepares to transition Mass Immunization Clinic Operations](#)

After eight months of intense work to immunize as many people as possible against COVID-19, Island Health is preparing to scale back mass immunization clinics - but not before making it easier than ever to be fully vaccinated.

LINKS, RESOURCES & FAQs

BCCDC Resources:

- [New Today](#): This section of the website highlights the latest guidance documents and updates to the website for health professionals.
- [About the vaccines](#)
- [Resources for Health Professionals](#)
- [Reporting adverse events](#)

Doctors of BC:

- [Info for doctors getting or giving the vaccine](#)
- [Updated toolkit for doctors' offices](#)

Frequently Asked Questions:

- [ImmunizeBC FAQ](#)